

Selfridge Field,
Building #1585, (Latrine) (Old Rod and Gun Club)
South of East Joy Blvd., west of Taxiway C
~~Harrison Township~~, Mt. Clemens Vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-ZZ

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GREAT LAKES SYSTEMS OFFICE
1709 JACKSON STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SELFRIDGE FIELD
BUILDING #1585, (LATRINE)
(Old Rod and Gun Club)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: South of East Joy Blvd., west of Taxiway C
Selfridge Air National Guard Base

Quad/UTM: Mt. Clemens vicinity, Macomb County, Michigan
U.S.G.S. New Haven Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.348420.4718800

Date of Construction: 1954

Present Owner: Air National Guard
3500 Fetchet Avenue
Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland 20762

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building #1585 was erected to support crews manning the 661st Radar units which provided long range search and identification radar to North American Air Defense (NORAD) for continuous surveillance of the North America to protect against nuclear attack. Although in a state of advanced deterioration, this latrine is a component of the only prefabricated personnel support complex surviving on base. It was an important locus in the daily regimen of personnel associated with the Army radar complexes and therefore illustrates an important facet of Selfridge's Cold War defense mission.

Historian: William Rutter, Midwest Environmental Consultants,
May, 1996

II. HISTORY

Buildings #1582-#1584 were erected in 1955, joined by a corridor linking their north sides to Building #1585, which had been erected in 1954¹. These buildings were constructed north of the southwest Nike Integrated Fire Control (IFC) complex and provided barracks and support for crews manning the 661st radar unit and Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) and later Nike facilities.² The prefabricated buildings were built from plans provided by the Butler Manufacturing Company of Indianapolis to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,³ and form part of the Army Air Defense Command (ADC) district that occupies a distinct complex in the southwestern portion of Selfridge, self contained and isolated from the rest of the base for functional and security reasons.

Buildings #1582-1585, barracks and support structures for complex personnel, later housed the base K-9 Corps.⁴ Guard dogs were brought onto U.S. military installations and Nike bases to increase security after Hercules missiles replace

¹Master Building List, on file, Selfridge Base Civil Engineers Office

²Interview, Colonel Robert Stone (ret.) Selfridge Base Museum Curator, August 27, 1995.

³Butler Manufacturing Company, "Prefabricated Building," Plans on file, Selfridge Base Museum

⁴Interview, Colonel Robert Stone, Curator Selfridge Base Museum, August 27, 1995

the Ajax, and were commonly quartered adjacent to Nike IFC and launch facilities. In recent years the #1580s series buildings housed the base Rod and Gun Club.

The 28th Artillery Group (Air Defense), a unit of the ADC under the control of NORAD, set up its headquarters at Selfridge in the southwest portion of the base in 1952.⁵ Initially in charge of administering the 90 millimeter gun emplacements for protecting cities such as Detroit, it was later assigned the responsibility of providing combat-ready air defense missile units for defense of the Detroit-Cleveland area and administered Nike missile battalions at Selfridge and others ringing Detroit and Cleveland.⁶ In 1969, the Nike missiles were removed from Selfridge and the remaining 28th Artillery Group administrative personnel were moved from the original location in the southwest corner of base to an area adjacent to 661st Radar Squadron.⁷ The 28th Artillery Group was deactivated 1974.⁸ The regional Nike headquarters and command structures were housed in buildings #1515 to #1537.

⁵Anonymous, History of Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1967, p.11.

⁶Ibid., p.11.

⁷ Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, 1977, p. 19.

⁸Ibid., p. 19.

In addition to missiles at Selfridge, the Detroit area firing batteries were located at Utica (Battery A), Carleton (Battery C) and Union Lake (Battery C). Cleveland sites were located near Painesville, Bratenahl, and Fairview Park.⁹ These batteries initially used Nike Ajax missiles but later adopted the more advanced Nike Hercules missiles.

Records of the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, provided information on the national level for Nike facilities during the period 1954-1974 (when the last Nikes were deactivated). Approximately 300 Nike sites are identified in 30 states, including 15 in Michigan and 94 in states within a 300 mile radius. The Detroit District Corps of Engineers under the DERP/FUDS program identified 170 Formerly Used Defense Sites in Michigan, most dating to Cold War, 15 of which are Nike silos. A consultant study completed over ten years ago identified about 300 Nike sites nationally.

III. DESCRIPTION

Building #1585 is a shed-roofed, single story, concrete block structure. It rests on a concrete slab and is shielded by a built up roof. It presents a basically

⁹Anonymous, Selfridge Air Force Base, Distinguished Visitors Edition, 1977, p.11.

rectangular footprint, 37 feet 4 inches by 21 feet 6 inches, with the two front bays exceeding the rear unit by 2'10" in width. Its north is joined to Buildings #1582-#1584 by a steel framed, corrugated metal sheathed single story hipped roof dependency corridor which joins together the southern elevations of Buildings #1582-#1584. This northern elevation is pierced by a single pedestrian access door leading from the dependency connecting to Buildings #1582-1584. Its eastern elevation is pierced by a central horizontal three light window and the rear (south) elevation, displays a symmetrical piercing pattern composed of a central wood frame windows flanked by double horizontal windows. The west elevation is two bays wide, defined by a single steel pedestrian entry door flanked to the south by a double steel entry door.

The plan of this building is divided into a number of interior spaces. The building is divided internally by a masonry partition wall that effectively divides the building into an eastern 18 foot 8 inch deep by 19 foot 4 inch wide unit and a western 21 foot 6 inch deep by 18 foot wide unit, neither accessible to the other though interior passages. The eastern unit is divided into four rooms the front and rear ranks each 7 and 12 feet wide, with the front rank 10 feet deep and the rear rank of 8 feet deep. These rooms housed the shower, toilet and wash facilities and store room and today present a vandal-damaged sea of porcelain fragments. The western unit consists of two rooms each accessed

by exterior entry doors. The larger of these rooms was the boiler room and the smaller is an individual toilet facility. The eastern portion of the front 8 foot deep unit is divided into three small storage rooms, and the remaining 14 foot width of this unit is accessed by a single pedestrian entry on the west elevation. This structure was a support facility for crews operating the Nike complex.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Anonymous, Guide and Directory, Selfridge Air Force Base, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1960.

_____, History of Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, unpublished ms., Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1967.

_____, Selfridge Air Force Base, Distinguished Visitors Edition, 1977, on file Base Public Information Office.

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Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, unpublished ms., Public Information Office, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan, 1977.

B. PLANS

Copy of floor plan drawing, dated August 18, 1968, Department of the Air Force Air Defense Command Installations, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. FLOOR PLAN BLDG. 1585.

C. INTERVIEWS

Colonel Robert Stone (Ret.), Curator, Selfridge Base Museum, October 13, 1995.

Eric Reeve, Selfridge Environmental Management, October 12, 1995.

Interview, John Rynkowski, Selfridge Environmental Management (former serviceman at Selfridge during 1960s), October 27, 1995.